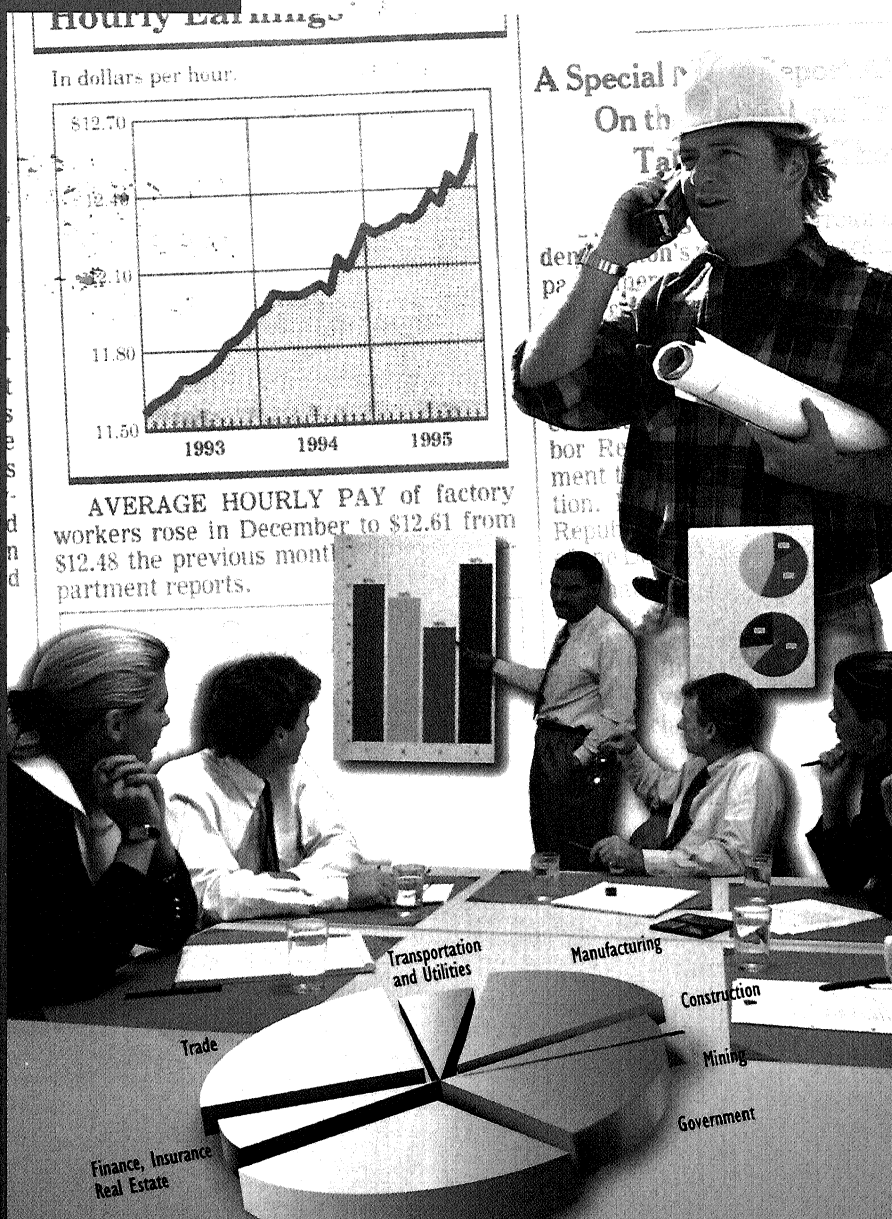


Business Information Guide

U.S. Department of Labor
Bureau of Labor Statistics



1997

Bureau
of Labor
Statistics

Where to get additional information

BLS has a number of information sources in the form of publications, news releases, time-series data, and research papers that may benefit your business. You can contact BLS about this information via:

Internet:

<http://stats.bls.gov>

Recorded Messages:

To listen to recorded messages call (202) 606-7828.

E-mail:

Send inquiries to Eric Figueroa at figueroa_e@bls.gov

Fax:

To receive BLS data by fax please dial (202) 606-6325.
To send any other inquiry by fax please dial
(202) 606-7890.

Telephone:

Information specialists provide a variety of services between the hours of 8:30 am and 4:30 pm, eastern time at (202) 606-5886.

TDD:

To use the TDD system for the hearing impaired dial (202) 606-5897.

Write or Personal Visit:

Bureau of Labor Statistics
Division of Information Services
2 Massachusetts Avenue, N.E.
Room 2860
Washington, D.C. 20212

Comments:

If you have any comments about this Business Information Guide, please write to the address above, or call Mary McMichael, Chief of the Information Services Division, at (202) 606-5886.

Business Information Guide

Bureau of Labor Statistics

The Bureau of Labor Statistics is the principal fact-finding agency of the Federal Government for labor and economic statistics. It collects, processes, analyzes, and disseminates sensitive statistical and economic data to the American public, Congress, other Federal agencies, State and local governments, business and labor.

Its mission is to produce and disseminate statistical data that are:

- Relevant to current social and economic issues
- Timely, reflecting today's rapidly changing economic conditions
- Accurate and consistently high in statistical quality
- Impartial in both subject matter and presentation

About this pamphlet

This pamphlet highlights the information produced by the Bureau of Labor Statistics that benefits both large and small businesses. It includes descriptions of selected statistical programs under the following headings:

- Employment and unemployment
- Prices and living conditions
- Compensation and working conditions
- Productivity
- Employment projections

See the opposite page for sources of additional information on these programs and other useful data produced by the Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Employment and Unemployment

Current Employment Statistics

A monthly survey of 400,000 business establishments that provides detailed industry data on nonfarm employment, hours, and earnings estimates based on payroll records. Current data on employment are available for most industries. The program is a cooperative Federal-State undertaking.

► Data uses:

Private sector

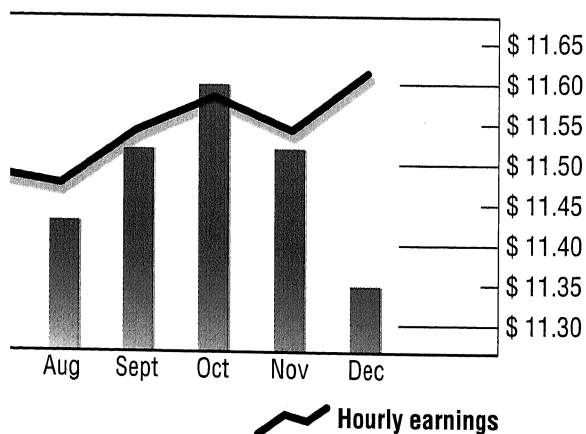
- Guide decisions on plant location, sales, and purchases
- Compare your business to the industry or economy as a whole
- Negotiate labor contracts based on industry or area hourly earnings and weekly hourly series
- Determine the employment base of States and metropolitan areas for bond ratings
- Detect and plan for swings in the business cycle using the employment and average weekly hours series

Public sector

- Evaluate the economic health of States and metropolitan areas
- Guide monetary policy decisions
- Assess the growth of industries
- Forecast tax revenue for States and metropolitan areas
- Measure employment, hours, and earnings to determine economic growth

hourly earnings (1995)

construction workers



Current Population Survey

A monthly survey of America's households that provides comprehensive information on the employment and unemployment experience of the nation's population. Studies based on the CPS cover a broad range of topics, including analyses of the nation's overall labor market situation as well as that of specific worker groups such as women, older workers, minorities, youth, veterans, and displaced workers.

► Data uses:

Private sector

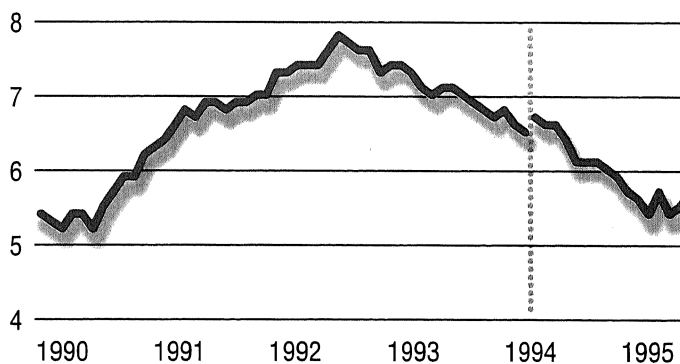
- Guide labor force planning
- Measure potential labor supply based on specific demographic groups
- Evaluate wage rates and earnings trends for specific groups

Public sector

- Evaluate economic health using employment and unemployment statistics
- Assess employment status and characteristics of the labor force, emerging trends, and changes
- Determine factors affecting changes in labor force participation

Unemployment rate

Seasonally adjusted, percent



Household data beginning in January 1994 reflect: 1) the introduction of the major redesign of the Current Population Survey questionnaire and collection method and 2) the introduction of population controls based on the 1990 census, adjusted estimated population undercount, and are not directly comparable with data for

Prices and Living Conditions

Consumer Price Index

The Consumer Price Index (CPI) measures the average change in the prices paid by urban consumers for a fixed market basket of goods and services. The CPI is based on prices of food, clothing, shelter, fuel, drugs, transportation fares, doctors' and dentists' fees, and other goods and services that people buy for day-to-day living. It is the most widely used measure of inflation.

► Data uses:

Private sector

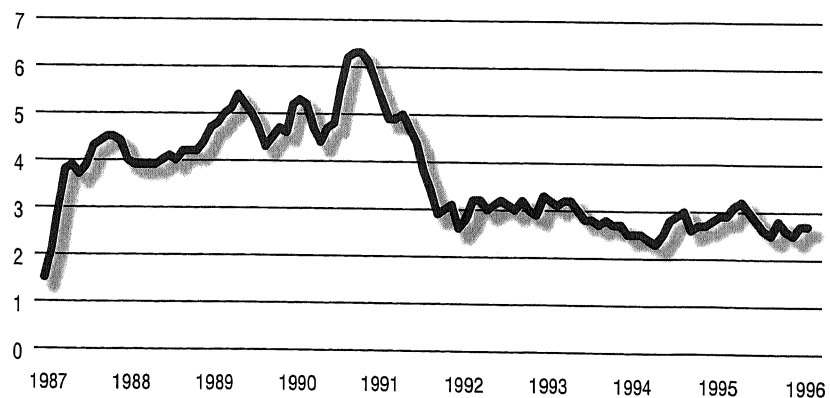
- Guide economic decisions such as wage increases
- Aid collective bargaining negotiations
- Adjust rents and other payments
- Assess health of business using constant dollars

Public sector

- Index Social Security and other payments
- Evaluate economic health of nation

Consumer Price Index, year-to-year percent change

(urban consumers)



Producer Price Index

Producer Price Indexes (PPI) measure the average change in prices received by domestic producers of goods at all stages of processing, as well as some services. Price data are collected for outputs in the mining, manufacturing, agriculture, fisheries, forestry, and service sectors of the economy. Gas, electricity, and public utilities are also included. Data are published monthly. Annual average indexes for groupings and items are also available.

► Data uses:

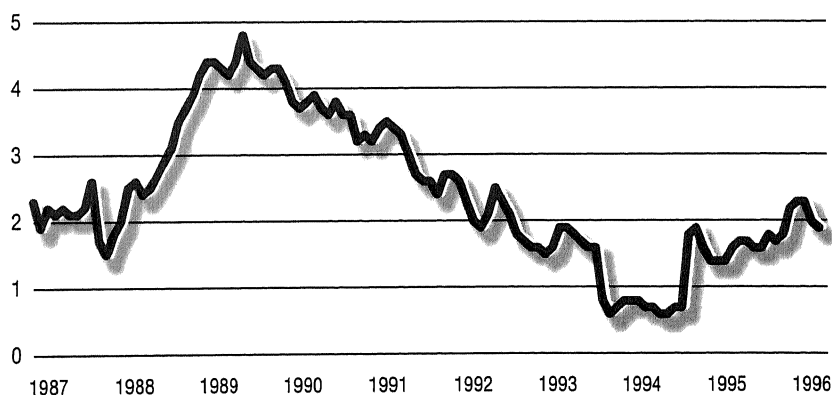
Private sector

- Determine escalation clauses in long-term sales and purchase contracts
- Forecast price movements for industries and products
- Measure inventory valuation
- Compare input and output costs

Public sector

- Measure inflationary trends in the economy
- Formulate and assess public policy

Producer Price Index, year-to-year percent change





Compensation and Working Conditions

Employee Benefits Survey

An annual survey of private sector and government establishments on the incidence of selected benefits provided by employers to their employees. The survey collects information on paid holidays, vacations, and other leaves, insurance plans, and pension plans. Data are also collected on the incidence of other benefits such as child care, wellness programs, and educational assistance.

Employment Cost Index

Measures changes in total compensation, in wages and salaries only, and in benefit costs only. All private nonagricultural industries are covered, as are State and local governments.

Occupational Pay Surveys

An extensive program of occupational compensation surveys that provides information on average weekly and hourly earnings for selected occupations for specific metropolitan and nonmetropolitan areas.

► Data uses:

Private sector

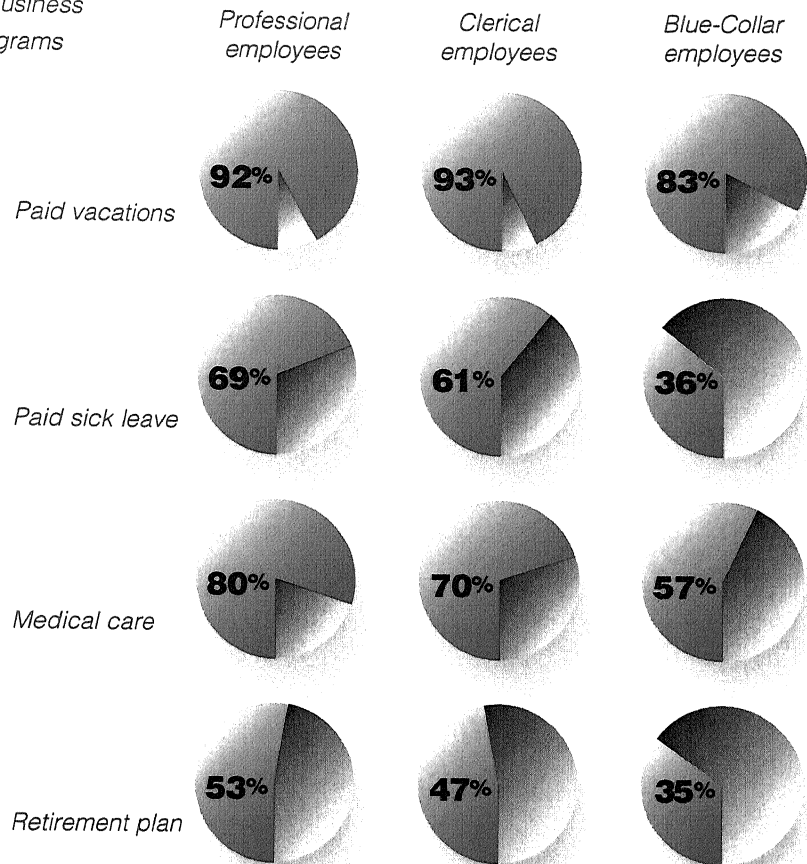
- Aid collective bargaining negotiations
- Evaluate benefits packages
- Analyze contract settlements
- Guide decisions in business or plant location
- Assist in wage and salary administration

Public sector

- Formulate and assess public policy
- Aid collective bargaining negotiations
- Evaluate benefits packages
- Analyze contract settlements

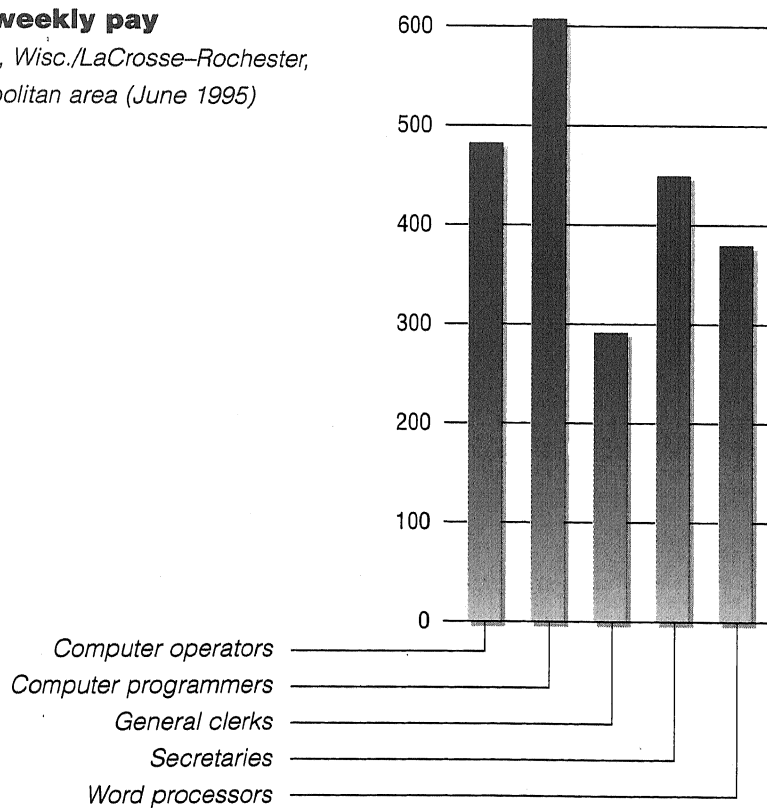
Percentage of full-time employees

participating in small-business
employee benefits programs



Average weekly pay

in Eau Claire, Wisc./LaCrosse-Rochester,
Minn. metropolitan area (June 1995)



Productivity and Employment Projections

Productivity

This program develops indexes of productivity output per unit of combined labor and capital inputs, from data collected on BLS establishment and household surveys.

Indexes are developed for major sectors of the economy and for individual industries. The aim is to understand factors underlying productivity change.

► Data uses:

Private sector

- Aid determination of investment options in labor and capital
- Evaluate competitiveness

Public sector

- Provide indicator of health of economy
- Evaluate competitiveness with other countries
- Assess sources of changes in productivity

Employment Projections

This program develops and publishes long-term economic projections. The information includes labor force trends by sex, race, ethnicity, and age, and includes employment trends by industry and occupation. Assessments are also made of the effect on employment of specified changes in economic conditions.

► Data uses:

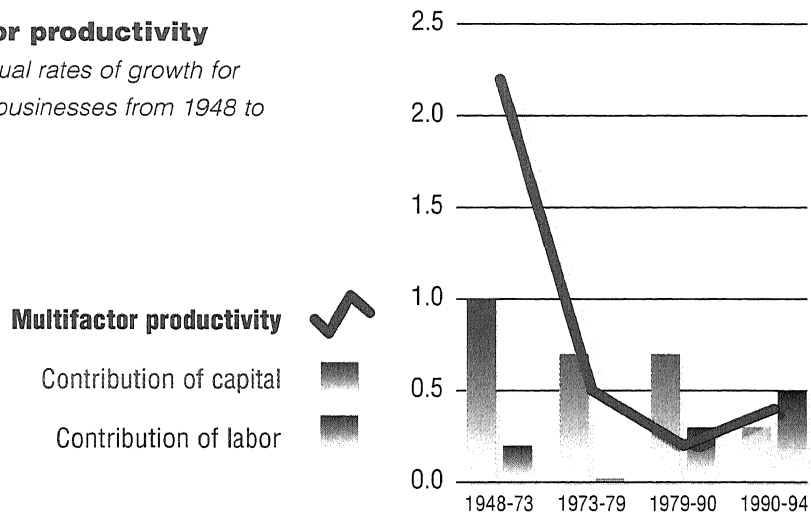
Private sector

• long-term labor force planning
• recruitment of labor
• training and counseling

• public policy
• educational needs

Multifactor productivity

Average annual rates of growth for
U.S. private businesses from 1948 to
1994



Occupational growth

Projected employment growth
by occupation, 1994-2005, in
thousands

